

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. - 14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A process for the dry impregnation of a highly porous mineral oxide which is silica, alumina, silica-alumina, zirconia or titanium oxide having a pore volume of at least 1 ml/g, comprising the steps of:

a) impregnating said oxide with a sufficient amount of concentrated orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid, said impregnation being performed in a dry mode whereby said acid is added to said oxide, then

b) drying said oxide at atmospheric pressure at a temperature of between 100 and 200°C for at least 3 hours, and, ~~then,~~

c) calcining said oxide at atmospheric pressure at a temperature of between 200°C and 500°C for at least 2 hours.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim ~~16~~ 15, wherein the highly porous mineral oxide is a mineral oxide with a pore volume of at least 3 ml/g.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein the mineral oxide is silica.

20. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein, in step a), the sufficient amount of concentrated orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid for the impregnation is the maximum amount that it is possible to impregnate on the mineral oxide, which is the volume for which the mineral oxide is no longer capable of absorbing the liquid orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid.

21. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein the polyphosphoric acid is pyrophosphoric acid, diphosphoric acid of formula $H_4P_2O_7$, triphosphoric acid of formula $H_5P_3O_{10}$, polyphosphoric acids of formula $H_{n+2}P_nO_{3n+1}$, or metaphosphoric acids of formula $H_nP_nO_{3n}$.

22. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 21, wherein the polyphosphoric acid used has an H_3PO_4 equivalent of greater than 100.

23. - 27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously Presented) A process comprising:
 providing a mineral oxide having a pore volume of at least 1 ml/g, the mineral oxide comprising silica, silica-alumina, zirconia or titania;
 impregnating the mineral oxide with orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid in a dry mode;
 drying the impregnated mineral oxide; and
 calcining the impregnated mineral oxide.

29. (Currently Amended) 'The process of claim 28, wherein the pore volume is at least 3 ~~ml/g~~ ml/g.

30. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 28, wherein the orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid is added to the mineral oxide in predetermined doses.

31. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 30, wherein the orthophosphoric or polyphosphoric acid is added to the mineral oxide in a dropwise manner.

32. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 28, wherein the drying is performed at 100°C-200°C for at least 3 hours.

33. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 32, wherein the calcining is performed at 200°C-500°C for at least 2 hours.

34. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 28, further comprising:
combining the impregnated mineral oxide with a polymer thereby forming a polymer-based composition.

35. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 34, wherein an amount of impregnated mineral oxide combined with the polymer is sufficient to constitute 5%-50%, by weight, of the polymer-based composition.